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BELL, BARK

61
"AN ACCOUNT OF MY STEWARDSHIP."

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BY

GEO. LEWIS ELLIOT,

IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS DENTAL FRIENDS AND OTHERS,

AT HIS OFFICE,

TORONTO,

ON THE EVENING OF THE

23rd MAY, 1870.

TORONTO:

BELL, BARKER & CO., CITY STEAM PRESS, Nos. 94 & 96 YONGE STREET, TORONTO.

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AN ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,—As the term of the Board of Examiners, of which I was a member, has drawn to a close, I feel it incumbent upon me to take a retrospective view of the past, and lay before you a *summary* of the proceedings as they transpired from time to time; and also to give, in as concise a manner as possible, an account of my stewardship.

And it is in this peculiar position, gentlemen, that I stand before you this evening.

The very flattering circumstances under which I was chosen a member of the Board of Examiners, by the Legislature, were rather gratifying; and impressed me with the importance of the duty devolving on me, as one of the twelve who were to pronounce and to establish an era in the history of dental chronology, hitherto unknown in our new and rising Dominion, and to give an impetus to its tide of progress which would carry it on, and higher up, in the scale of acknowledged professions of the day.

Pardon me, gentlemen, if I retrograde for a little, and refer to the formation of the first dental association. You are all aware of the exertions put forth by a few faithful pioneers, to prepare the way for a more triumphant march in our chosen art, and of the success which finally crowned their efforts.

And considering the raw material with which the institution was formed and put into working order, I think that the dental profession of Ontario may congratulate themselves most felicitously on the results.

Accompanying these efforts, gentlemen, was a great diversity of opinion, and in most cases, most obstinately persisted in; and the usual amount of clamoring and fault-finding attendant on the gathering together of such a heterogeneous mass of mind and matter of what originally composed the first Dental Association of Ontario.

This, gentlemen, I fortunately escaped.

This I intended from the beginning should all be gone through with before I had any connection with it. First, because within the last twelve years there have been several attempts made to form an association for the advancement of Dentistry by myself and others; and notwithstanding all the facts were laid before the profession, and sound reasonings the subject would command, we scarcely got a satisfactory answer from a single dentist in the whole Province.

So you see, gentlemen, that I had very little faith in the association in its embryo condition.

But I am happy to say that it has passed through all its stages of gestation, and had a most glorious birth. And I trust that with the last efforts which are now generally successful, in forming local associations, much good will be done, not only to advance dentistry as an art, but also to establish the rates of fees, which should be most rigidly adhered to and enforced by dentists in their general practice.

In returning to the subject of stewardship again, I come now to my connection with the Board of Examiners.

As with the Association so it was with the Board, I had little faith in such an institution; yet I decided to join in the good work providing others meant to work themselves, when, as I said before, I was officially informed that I was chosen one of its members. And accordingly, as per notice from our President, I made my appearance and my politest bow before the other distinguished eleven at the Queen's Hotel, Toronto.

The meeting was called to order by the grave and stentorian voice of our worthy president.

Silence! shouts the president, and there *was* silence.

And then followed those by-laws and the constitution; heaven save the mark, accompanied, as usual, with all the paraphernalia of learned nothingness by the secretary. This over, resolutions were offered and passed, and the machine was got into working order.

And then commenced the grand grind of making us all great men and L.D.S.'s. The importance of the hour, gentlemen, was immense, and the dignity displayed on the occasion was immense too; that is, we registered our names for each other, thus creating ourselves Licentiates of Dental Surgery.

This was the first grind.

And then commenced grind No. 2; this was the grinding out of stars of a lesser magnitude. This was done, gentlemen, by granting licenses, after a most *thorough* and *searching* (?) examination, to dentists who had previously given the exorbitant time of three to six weeks studentship in the office of some very clever and experienced practitioner.

An opportunity was thus presented to us, gentlemen, of showing ourselves masters of the subject. But perhaps the less said of these examinations the better, and we will pass them over in silence.

I trust that our acts are buried to the world if not to ourselves. Let us tread lightly, nor disturb their slumbers, lest their frightful ghosts appear to us like a dread phantom of reality, and, gnashing their bony fleshless jaws in music most discordant, laugh to scorn our vain pretensions and taunt us for our want of duty.

Thus matters continued, turning out at each successive semi-annual meeting what I may term rather a questionable batch of dentists, (in many respects,) with here and there an exception.

And I venture to say that not one from the country but will bear me out in what I say. It was a regular pitch and toss game. But,

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as a general thing, the Board secured the thirty dollars; and the professional delinquent went on his way rejoicing.

Now this state of things greatly puzzled me. For I really could not see that we were at all raising the standard of dental education, or dental excellence, in going through this ridiculous farce every six months.

Here were a large number of dentists who were ignorant of their calling, to a certain extent, and who, previous to the examination, honestly acknowledged that they were incapable of practising with that degree of success which they had anticipated. These dentists, I say, went forth, armed and equipped with this insignia of renown (the L.D.S.) emblazoned on their crests; backed up by twelve picked men as a reserve, to engage again in the practice of an art they knew as little of, the day after the examination, as they did the day before. These proceedings caused a good deal of comment, for they were unsatisfactory to the members of the Board, and they were particularly unsatisfactory to those dentists who came up for examination. For they, in the course of their examination, superficial as it was, could clearly perceive that they were *not* thoroughly prepared to practice, either in a theoretical or practical point of view.

The opening of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons was, therefore, frequently spoken of and discussed.

But there was a manifest feeling of jealousy existing among the members, lest one would take a position which the other should; and as they could not all be professors and all deans, the matter was never allowed to come to any decided conclusion. I, however, discovered that there were two members who were determined to open a dental school, irrespective of the Board, and I accordingly wrote to Dr. Day, the president, that such was the case, and begged of him to call a meeting and take steps at once towards opening the Royal College.

The two gentlemen just referred to, were Dr. J. S. Scott and J. O'Donell.

Notwithstanding the bitter feeling and opposition as exhibited by the latter gentleman towards myself, and particularly in reference to the Canada College of Dentistry, over which I had the honor to preside; notwithstanding all this, I say, he was the first person who suggested to me the propriety of opening an institution "independent of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons," and as he subsequently voted against opening this latter institution, as I shall presently relate to you, it was satisfactory proof to me, at least, that he was at heart in favor of an independent school, if any at all, to be sustained by parties not particularly connected with the Board.

And I am certain, as also Dr. Scott assured me, that if Mr. O'Donell had been offered a professorship in the school which Dr. Scott and myself established, viz.: the Canada College of Dentistry, he would gladly have accepted it, and there would have been no opposition whatever from any quarter.

But to return, Dr. Day responded to my request, and called a meeting of the Board, and the committee chosen to consider the

matter of opening the Royal College of Dental Surgeons, were Day, Chittenden, O'Donell, Scott, and Elliot.

Messrs. Day, O'Donell, and Chittenden considered it *premature*; and therefore no immediate want of a school. Indeed, in their opinion, it should be deferred at least three years, and, perhaps, five years. Truly a favored land, when education ceases to be a necessity for its people.

But one would expect that these gentlemen, knowing the necessity, as they really did, of an educational department, to prepare the young and inexperienced practitioners for a more successful career, that they would have hailed with joy the day that gave auspices of a higher and more enlightened condition of our profession, and would have been among the first to plant the standard of dental education in our midst, and proudly bear aloft the colours of progress and reformation in the grand march of human affairs.

But alas! gentlemen, they appeared on the stage of action as persistent opponents to both.

They therefore voted against it, leaving Scott and myself in the minority, and we reluctantly submitted to the majority and signed the report.

This report was submitted to the members present and was adopted with a good deal of hesitation. But, had all of the members been present, Messrs. Bogart, Kahn, Relyea being absent, (those latter gentlemen being really in favor of a dental school) the result would have been quite the reverse, and the Royal College of Dental Surgery would have been established, as it should have been in the fall of 1868. Thus, however, it came about that it was *not* established.

But this decision after all was not satisfactory, even to those who voted in favor of it; and by other members of the Board it was received with surprise and disappointment.

The meeting just referred to took place on Oct. 2nd, 1868, and the best proof I can give you of the dissatisfaction felt by a majority of the Board is this,—that at the very next meeting, on January 19, 1869, only about 14 weeks subsequent, the Board chose a committee to wait on Dr. Scott and myself (Elliot) to make some arrangements to amalgamate the two schools, or, in other words, to unite the Royal College of Dental Surgeons, that was to be, with the Canada College of Dentistry.

The especial promoters of the Canada College of Dentistry were as follows:—Charles Kahn, G. V. Relyea, J. S. Scott and your humble servant, G. L. Elliot. It is well known that the two latter persons have taken an active part and still sustain it. But as there has been some doubt as regards Messrs. Kahn and Relyea, and as they have also endeavoured to shirk the responsibility and place the origin of the Canada College of Dentistry on other shoulders, I subjoin the following letters in answer to my communications to them, asking their advice, and also if they coincided with my views to open a school, to accept professorships in the above institution:

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MR. KAHN'S LETTER.

Stratford, Nov. 6th, 1868.

MY DEAR ELLIOT,—I am glad to see, both by the *Globe* and your letter, that the Dental School is an established fact. I trust that it will be a success. Had I been in Toronto at the last meeting of the Board I would have given my vote for the Board to establish the College, (meaning the Royal College) but, as it has declined to do so, I think you and Dr. Scott deserve credit for opening the school to afford instruction to those who will have to pass examination in January next, which, of course, will be a strict one, and there can be no excuse on the part of the candidates that they had no opportunity of getting instruction in Canada. Hoping that it may be remunerative to those who will have to perform the labor, and beneficial to those who avail themselves of their instruction,

I remain,

Yours truly,

CHARLES KAHN.

MR. RELYEA'S LETTER.

I will give you that part of his letter which refers to the College.

Belleville, Aug. 21, 1868.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—Success to you. I have no objection of being associate to Scott, but would prefer operative and surgical dentistry to mechanical. I can see no objection to you and Scott "running" the concern, *and am with you with my whole soul.*

Yours, &c.,

G. V. N. RELYEA.

You see by these two letters, gentlemen, that Kahn and Relyea were as enthusiastic in the promotion of an independent institution as could be desired. We, therefore, could see no impediment in the way. And the Canada College of Dentistry was accordingly opened under the most favorable auspices.

But I am sorry to say, gentlemen, that, in the midst of its success, we were most cowardly deserted by two of its most earnest supporters: Messrs. Kahn and Relyea.

These two men were allured away from their post of duty mainly through the influence of Day, O'Donell, and Chittenden. The same happy trio who intended to put into operation the "choking off" system.

It is not perhaps generally understood by *all* of the profession what this choking off system means? Gentlemen, it is this,—At the extra meeting of the Board, October 2nd, 1868, to which I have already referred, there was a good deal of discussion, as there always was, about "these fellows about the country taking all the jobs and doing them for nothing." Meaning the country dentists. And I have no doubt but Day and Chittenden had suffered to a considerable extent by these *terrible* marauders, and therefore it naturally excited their

bloody ire against them. And they were determined to take some course to put a stop to it and rid themselves of the nuisance.

How then could this be done? I will show you.

The Legislature of Ontario had placed the power in the hands of the Board of Examiners to examine and pluck, and compel to desist from the practice of dentistry every man in Ontario, under five years regular practice, who was not able to pass examination. The Legislature also gave the Board authority to open a school of instruction, for the benefit of those who were unprepared to pass examination, and expected, of course, that the Board would exercise as honestly and sacredly the latter prerogative as the former. But the happy trio above mentioned vainly imagined that they could do otherwise. They decided to avail themselves of the former prerogative and *ignore* the latter.

When the committee of five, Day, O'Donell, Chittenden, Scott, and Elliot, met in solemn conclave, to consider the propriety of opening the College Royal, the noble Chittenden thus expressed his views: "I tell you what it is, Elliot, there's too many of these fellers a cutting about the country, and it's high time they were choked off." I beg to state, gentlemen, that this pert address was delivered in the pure Yankee vernacular.

Elliot: Of course, Mr. Chittenden, we can pluck them if they don't pass examination, and we can prevent them hereafter practising dentistry. But while the Legislature has given us this power, it has also imposed upon us the duty, the sacred duty, of seeing that these unfortunate dentists are educated and prepared to pass examination; to place within their reach the means of education, and then, if they fail, it is their fault, not ours. But let us first do *our* duty to our brother dentists, and to the public at large, and then we can await the result with a clear conscience. You can understand from this, gentlemen, that it was Mr. Chittenden's object to keep them in ignorance, so that when they came up for examination they would of course be quite unprepared to pass the fiery ordeal, and consequently would be plucked and obliged to give up practice.

Thus matters stood with the committee, three against two; and we, Scott and myself, according to the established rule, of the minority submitting to the majority, signed the decree that the Royal College of Dental Surgeons should not be opened.

But, gentlemen, my views were unchanged, and as I have said before, were a majority of the Board. We still believed that a school should be established.

The time and the hour demanded it, and it was a duty we owed our calling, to at once lay the corner stone of an institution, which, in years to come, we might point to as a monument of glory to our chosen art; and one which, in all time, might lead the humble followers of our profession to their "alma mater," to draw thereof from her bosom, and become refreshed.

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Taking this view of the case then, gentlemen, you can easily imagine the chagrin and disappointment felt by Day, O'Donell, and Chittenden, and others of the Board, who were luke-warm in their zeal for a dental school, when they learned, to their mortification, that this noble enterprise had really been accomplished by other parties. *They* revelled in the happy anticipation that this honored distinction would fall upon *their* sublime shoulders, and like a soft and luxurious mantle, rich in ample folds, would cover them with glory and renown through all time ; while future generations, with pride, would point to them as the founders and promoters of dental education in the young and noble Dominion of Canada. But intending, of course, to take their own time for it, and expecting in their greatness, that others of course again would wait for them.

I think I may say, gentlemen, that it was a clear case of "misplaced confidence."

It was very unfortunate. It was indeed.

They, however, could only vent their anger by sending broadcast over the Province and publishing in the public journals, the following circular and ultimatum :

CANADA DENTAL COLLEGE.

(To the Editor of the Globe.)

SIR,—The announcement in your issue of Oct. 31st, of the contemplated opening of a Dental College in Toronto, seems rather strange. The Board, at its last meeting, decided that it was not advisable to open a College for the present. Under these circumstances the action of the promoters of this College is simply absurd. The Act of Incorporation distinctly states that the College must be under the control of the Board, and how this one can be under its protection is a difficult question. Of course there can be no objection to starting a private College for the private gain of its promoters, any more that there would be objections to inaugurate a Lunatic Asylum for a similar purpose. But when the Board decided to leave the question in abeyance for the present, the College announced must be opened with the design of supporting itself, and need look for no assistance from the Board. The Board will not stultify itself by giving its countenance to the present scheme.

Yours most respectfully,

B. W. DAY,

President of the Royal College Dental Surgeons, Ontario.

In reference to the latter part of this circular Dr. Day was quite right in saying that "the college announced must be opened with the design of supporting itself." And I can say to you, gentlemen, that if the Royal College had been opened with the same honest design of

"supporting itself" there would have been no occasion for appropriating the sum of \$300 to maintain it, and which, after all, has turned out a most miserable failure.

Dr. Day finishes up by saying "that the Board will not stultify itself by giving its countenance to the present scheme."

I must say that he handles the English language in rather a bungling manner for a president. But I suppose he means to say that the members of the Board are not such fools as to give their countenance, etc., etc. But Dr. Day was not aware, probably, that *seven* members of that Board were really "giving their countenance" to the scheme, and *four* of the seven were actually taking an active part in it.

This being the case, gentlemen, it appears to me that the only fool to be found, with reference to this matter, is Dr. Day himself.

At all events you see he laboured under a mistake.

Well, what was the result, or what followed?

Why this, gentlemen,—That Dr. Day with others decided, at the next meeting, in January, 1869, only ten weeks after this circular was issued, that it was, after all, really necessary to open a dental school, and, as I said before, advocated the amalgamation of the two schools. Proving, more conclusively than ever, that Scott and myself were right after all as to the necessity of a school. Take a retrospective view, gentlemen, and see how we were abused for it.

However, gentlemen, as I have just remarked, a second attempt was made to amalgamate with the Canada College of Dentistry, established by Scott and myself, or rather to come to an understanding.

For you are aware that the Royal College of Dental Surgeons was not in existence, and never had an existence.

It was only in the prospective. There was nothing of it in fact but the name.

And I consider they had a great amount of assurance to make such a proposition to me; to amalgamate their *quasi* institution with my *de facto* one.

One which had really a most successful commencement, and one which, with all the usual appointments, had been carried triumphantly through a first session, most gratifying, and, may I not add, gentlemen, most commendable to its promoters.

Well, gentlemen, the Royal College was opened, or rather it was announced to be, on the 1st October, 1869.

Messrs. O'Donnell and Callender state, in the circular they issued, that "arrangements have been made to make the educational standard of students equal to similar institutions in other countries."

So, gentlemen, the first thing they did to accomplish the noble object was to adjourn the commencement of this college from the 1st October to the 15th December, making an interim of six weeks out of the six months in which they were to accomplish the grand object of making "the educational standard equal to similar institutions in other countries."

Well now I can't say, gentlemen, exactly what the *role* may be in dental schools in other countries to raise the standard of dental edu-

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cation, but I can scarcely believe that they deprive the student of six weeks of education out of the regular term announced, after taking the sum of \$100 for the tuition of each student. And coolly tell him to wait till they are ready to commence lectures.

It was also announced in the circular "that the faculty will enter upon their arduous (!) duties with the full conviction that their labors to elevate the standard of the profession in this country will be recognized and appreciated by the public generally."

And I can assure Messrs. O'Donell and Callender, who concocted this grand scheme of imposition, that they *will* be fully recognized and appreciated by the public generally. And none can better estimate them at their true worth than the two unfortunate dupes who have been needlessly spending their time and money for the last six months in Toronto.

You may remember, gentlemen, that Mr. Chittenden stated at the meeting of the Dental Association, in Belleville, that the Royal College would be a self-sustaining institution. When, already, he and his friends had quietly appropriated the sum of \$300 for this very purpose.

Subsequently they received \$210 more from the two students who had been surreptitiously inveigled into attendance on it. Making in all \$510.

I will leave it to you, gentlemen, to discover, if possible, the precise locality of that sum of \$510 at the present time.

A suggestion was made by one of O'Donell's friends, that he (O'Donell) should have a certain sum of money granted him, as a bonus, for his services as secretary.

The suggestion certainly seemed preposterous to me at first; but, as the matter was brought up for discussion and a majority of the Board were in favor of it, and feeling, too, that I would be considered ungenerous not to coincide, I gave my sanction to it.

This was at the last July meeting, 1869.

And, as I was one of the Finance Committee, I signed a report, with others, that he should have the sum of two hundred dollars for the two years' services.

Mr. O'Donell tells me that it was \$200 for each year. If this is the case it was a mistake on my part, for I would not listen to such an arrangement.

Well, gentlemen, in common with the other members, I admit that Mr. O'Donell has done his duty as secretary throughout the term we have served. And it is the custom in other institutions to vote a bonus to the secretary for his extra work. And I assure you that I should be the last one to deny any one their just dues.

But when I saw how recklessly, on the winding up of our term, the funds of the Board had been squandered in the miserable attempt to get into operation the Royal College of Dental Surgeons, I withdrew my support.

Another reason I will give you.

Mr. O'Donell, at our last meeting, Jan. 23rd, 1870, offered a resolution, which ran thus:

"That all (students) who have become articled subsequent to the passing of the Act, March 3rd, 1868, be obliged to attend the regular terms in the Royal College of Dental Surgeons, before this Board will admit them for examination, unless they can give satisfactory proof of having attended the same term in some regular chartered dental school."

Now, gentlemen, the matter stands thus.

The Board met on January 19th, 1869, and passed a by-law that students shall be articled to regular practicing dentists, to serve faithfully for two years, (no more) to be admitted for examination.

Dentists accepted students upon these terms, students made arrangements to carry out these terms, when, forsooth, in Jan., 1870, the Board pass another by-law that these very students will have to attend two sessions, of six months each, at the Royal College, (taking necessarily two years longer, besides all the attendant expenses thereof,) before they can come up for examination.

This arrangement will simply be a matter of impossibility, for the masters and students to carry out. And I consider it a most tyrannical proceeding.

Now, gentlemen, with the first arrangements with your students, which were indeed instituted by the Board themselves, how, I ask, in the name of common sense, are you to reconcile yourselves with the second.

Are you aware of the extra expense this by-law will impose on your students, *after*, please to observe, they have served their two years with you?

1st. There is tuition for two terms, of six months each term.....	\$200.00
2nd. Matriculation	5.00
3rd. Board and washing, two terms, six months each term	208.00
	<hr/>
	\$413.00

4th. Travelling expenses, clothes, and incidental expenses will bring it up to at least \$500.00

5th. It must necessarily break in upon two years more, besides the two years spent with the master.

Making altogether *four years*.

Now I ask, gentlemen, who among all the dental students in Ontario, can afford this amount of time and money?

And yet you say that you will not submit to it. I declare to you, gentlemen, you *must* submit to it, unless you elect a new Board, who will cancel, and that forever, the acts of folly and imposition practiced by the old Board.

This resolution, which is to this effect, to actually take students from their masters, regardless of the loss or inconvenience they caused to either one or the other; without even consulting the dentists of

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Mr. O'Donell, at our last meeting, Jan. 23rd, 1870, offered a resolution, which ran thus:

By Mr. O'Donell, at our last meeting, Jan. 23rd, 1870, offered a resolution, which ran thus:

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Ontario as to the propriety, or the slightest consideration whatever shown them for taking so remarkable and unprecedented a step.

Mr. O'Donell has the impudence and assurance to offer such a resolution, and who was it seconded by, I ask?

By Mr. Chittenden, of Hamilton.

Consequently there is to be no such thing as a *rising* dentist.

It is only those who *have* risen that can follow their avocation, and who have fortunately escaped the "choking off" process, which Day, O'Donell, and Chittenden struggled so hard to put into operation.

But, failing in this, they have instituted another system, just mentioned, but this time backed up by a few other adherents, viz., Callender, Wood, Relyea, etc. I can only say, gentlemen, that your rights and privileges have been tampered with. And the sooner you elect a fresh Board of Examiners, the better it will be for the advancement of your calling. It only shows to what extent those persons who have never before, in all their lives, been placed in a position to exercise their authority, will attempt to carry out their impudent and designing pretensions, regardless of any consideration or justice they owe their fellow men.

Meeting for the election of the new Board of Examiners, will take place at the Assembly Hall, corner King and Bay Streets, Toronto, on the 7th of June, 1870. *Every man should be present.*

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